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On autochthonous violence

ABSTRACT: This essay analyses the relationship between violence and sacrifice in the context of political agency, starting from its Neolithic origins of religious sacrifice on to the relationship between violence and state power in the modern era. In the view of the author, the contemporary relationship between violence and politics cannot be precisely analysed without taking into account the relationship between computer and internet technology and the libidinal economy of radicalization.

Keywords: Pharmakos, Violence, Sacrifice, Politics, State

1. Introduction

The era of the Weimar Republic, in which the *Spartacus insurrection* took place and almost ended the first German democratic state, was also the time of the *grands métarécits moderne*, as Lyotard called them (Lyotard, 1979). The methodological connection between grand narratives and totalitarianism (of thought, of politics, of identity, etc.) seems obvious from a historical perspective with a comfortable distance of a century, but it seems fair to argue that it might not have been too clear at the time.

The feelings of liberty and the atmosphere of departure towards a new era that swept through the hearts and minds of Europeans must have been exhilarating. Inebriated by this and a sense of belonging to a group fighting for a worthy cause, it is always too easy for the individual to mistake the exemplary utopia of said effort for actual reality being within the realm of possibility.

Sadly, we know that these dreams and aspirations all ended in a vicious circle of violence, terror and genocide. What Bolsheviks and Fascists both could agree on and bond over, however, was the call to arms for an idea and the intoxication that came with it. The rush of the fight, the danger to life and limb while sacrificing themselves for the struggle was what they saw in themselves and in the other, i.e. the enemy.

It would seem trivial to simply draw a connection between the violence of times past to the violence in our present in order to formulate a critique. While there is certainly some kind of truth to that idea, it is our view that this type of interpretation would fall short to ask for the underlying basis of violence as such. To develop this idea further, we could enquire: Is there a deeper connection between state formation, civilization and violence that might be so omnipresent that it becomes virtually invisible?

This essay does not seek to provide definitive answers but rather to ask questions from a different perspective. We aim to provide prolegomena for an alternative analysis towards the notion of violence.

2. The nomadic war machine

To begin with this approach, it seems necessary to turn the focus of observation to a time before state-formation and their institutions of monopolizing violence. One of the various critiques levelled against *A thousand plateaus* by Deleuze and Guattari is the felt absence of a classification of distinct time periods in their chapters on anthropology and state-formation. Such an argument fails to take into account the two different types of time Deleuze and Guattari talk about, *aeon* and *chronos*.

Aeon: the indefinite time of the event, the floating line that knows only speeds and continually divides that which transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet- here, a simultaneous too-late and too-early, a something that is both going to happen and has just happened. *Chronos*: the time of measure that situ-ates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject. Boulez distinguishes tempo and nontempo in music: the ‘pulsed time’ of a formal and functional music based on values versus the ‘nonpulsed time’ of a floating music, both floating and machinic, which has nothing but speeds or differences in dynamic. In short, the difference is not at all between the ephemeral and the durable, nor even between the regular and the irregular, but between two modes of individuation, two modes of temporality. (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980, p. 283)

Chronos only becomes indispensable as a means of measurement with the advent of the state, that is, other forms of historicity than solely oral tradition. It is by division and classification of time periods that the historical discipline makes possible its transcendental end point whereas pre-state societies are generally closer to an immanent understanding of time (*aeon*), in spite of their respective oral histories. As a general premise, we can stipulate that state formation had deep and long-lasting consequences for the conditions upon which space and time are perceived and processed within a social order. Their semantic as well as their recorded history contributed to the formation of distinct units of time (*chronos vs. aeon*) and space (*striated vs. smooth*) and the creation of institutions and concepts to administer both. Pre-state and non-sedentary societies would however use different means of orientation.

The war machine is exterior to the State apparatus. (...) As for the war machine in itself, it seems to be irreducible to the State apparatus, to be outside its sovereignty and prior to its law: it comes from elsewhere. (...) In every respect, the war machine is of another species, another nature, another origin than the State apparatus. (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980, pp. 351)

Such, then, is the structural relationship primitive society generally maintains with war. Now, a certain type of primitive society exists (existed) in the world in which the relationship to war went far beyond what was said above. These were societies in which war-like activity was somehow subdivided or overdetermined: on the one hand, it assumed, as in all primitive societies, the properly sociopolitical function of maintaining communities by ceaselessly digging and redigging the gap between them; on the other hand, it unfolded on a completely different level, no longer as a political means of a sociological strategy-letting centrifugal forces play themselves out in order to ward off all forces of unification - but indeed as a private goal, as the warrior's personal end. (...) What new figure does the twofold dimension that war assumes here assign to the social body? It is upon this body that a strange space - a foreign space - is outlined; an unforeseeable organ is attached to it: the particular social group constituted by the ensemble of warriors. (Clastres, 1980, pp. 281)

As is evident in the quotes above, the formation of entities that claim a monopoly on violence predates early state formation. Deleuze and Guattari further elaborate that rather than violence and war being the aim of the war machine, its true purpose lies somewhere else, that is, in the epistemology and ontology of space. In an interview led by Claire Panet, Deleuze delves deeper into the notion of space in the context of the definition of the notion of *territory* (Boutang, Panet, 2011). He goes on to explain that in order to be able to claim territory, animals are permanently traversing space, therefore constituting territory (such as bees), which in some cases is combined with impermanent and iterative demarcation techniques (i.e. urinating dogs).

On the side of human beings, once nomadic societies became sedentary, the formerly strong methodological ties between war machine, movement and space had to be altered. Permanent architecture was not only rendering an alternative concept of space for these societies, it also reconfigured the phenomenological criteria of time via the introduction of persistent multigenerational dwellings and social semantics of fixed and recorded traditions and customs.

We employ the metaphor of dwelling in the house of Being as a guideline for the anthropological movement of thought and thus ask how an entirely pre-human living being, a herd animal, which, seen from the paleontological perspective, must have lain somewhere in the spectrum of species between a post-ape and a pre-sapiens, can have started out on the path that led to the "house of Being." In large part the answer is already included in the metaphor as soon as one suspends its figurative meanings and imagines the genesis of the human being as an actual house affair, as a drama of domestication in the radical sense of the word. If one could formulate the theory of the house as the site of human genesis — or better: of housing [Hausens] as the engendering of this site — then one would also already possess a paleontology — a doctrine of the Being of the most ancient conditions. It would immediately be the theory of the primal site. It would show how the 'sojourn' or the mode of being-in [In-Seins] at a specific site was able to become a motive and ground for the

clearing of Being and thereby for the hominization of the pre-hominid. The expectations regarding the investigation of such a primordial bursting site are high, because it must correspond to the state of the art on both sides, the ontological as well as the anthropological. The analytic of the house before the house is the proving ground for the new constellation of 'Being and Space.' (Sloterdijk, 2001, p. 106)

The social capacity for violence that comes with the war machine, however, does not simply cease to exist along with the nomadic lifestyle for societies in spatial transition. In fact, there is reason to believe that the occurrence of violent acts and oppression intensified within sedentary societies in their early formation phase, along with oedipal aspects of filiation¹. Once these sedentary groups became large enough, a regulatory mechanism had to be found in order to counteract an infinite regress of vengeful acts of violence between inhabitants.

On the other end of the spectrum of that process lies the formation of the war machine proper which occurs when the state appropriates the nomadic war machine into its interiority. In other words, violence had firstly to be institutionalized within the *communitas* in order to be formalized as a military force operating outside of state boundaries.

That includes but is not limited to the emergence of a military complex, a warrior-soldier caste, training facilities, weapons manufacturing and the coupling of the military to other institutions of state, such as the political processes of courts and assemblies as well as forms of jurisprudence and inquisitions. Put differently and in consideration of the underlying dialectics, we could argue that in order to *invent* stately war, its spatial demarcations had to be assumed first which can not happen without a certain amount of foundational violence.

3. Sacrificial crisis

It is at this point in the observation that the writings of René Girard become relevant insofar as they provide a basis for explanation of the correlation between violence and social cohesion. Girard describes the need for a single, symbolic act of violence that is shared by a social collective in order to suppress and control spontaneous, individual acts of the same. Unsurprisingly, Girard relates this process to religious sacrifice and delineates the shared history of violence and religion starting from animism, polytheism to monotheism in order to arrive at what he calls the *sacrificial crisis*. (Girard, 1972) In short, the term describes a crisis wherein the threat of arbitrary violence re-enters insofar that there

¹ in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari understand these terms

is neither an end-point to the frequency of sacrifice nor the criteria for its offerings, like the polytheistic practices of Ancient Rome or the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac.

The primitive mind, in contrast, has no difficulty imagining an affiliation between violence and nondifferentiation and, indeed, is often obsessed by the possible consequences of such a union. Natural differences are conceived in terms of cultural differences, and vice versa. Where we would view the loss of a distinctive quality as a wholly natural phenomenon having no bearing on human relationships, the primitive man might well view this occurrence with deep dread. Because there is no real difference between the various modes of differentiation, there is in consequence no difference between the manner in which things fail to differ; the disappearance of natural differences can thus bring to mind the dissolution of regulations pertaining to the individual's proper place in society—that is, can instigate a sacrificial crisis. (Girard, 1972, p.59)

Whereas in monotheism live sacrifice predominantly consists of an animal, human offerings were anything but uncommon in other religions. Let us take a closer look at the *pharmakos* of Greek antiquity, a sacrificial human being endowed with numerous privileges in return for their wilful death in the context of a religious ritual. The voluntary element, combined with the underlying function of religious sacrifice *per se* (as a control mechanism for arbitrary violence) is crucial since it contributes to the perceived immaculacy of the offering and therefore to the overall symbolical efficacy. In order to differentiate the person designated for human sacrifice from other members of the community, it is necessary that the *pharmakos* cannot be vested with other social roles and public offices. In that sense, the *pharmakos* can be perceived as being outside of society, but at the same time a critical component for social cohesion on the inside, thus occupying both positions at the same time while holding little to no power over their personal fate.

As I have said, no mistake is possible in the case of animal sacrifice. But it is quite another case with human victims. If we look at the extremely wide spectrum of human victims sacrificed by various societies, the list seems heterogeneous, to say the least. It includes prisoners of war, slaves, small children, unmarried adolescents, and the handicapped; it ranges from the very dregs of society, such as the Greek *pharmakos*, to the king himself. Is it possible to detect a unifying factor in this disparate group? We notice at first glance beings who are either outside or on the fringes of society: prisoners of war, slaves, *pharmakos*. (Girard, 1972, p. 12)

Interestingly, the role of the *pharmakos* can be likened to the role of the chieftain in so-called “primitive societies”, which, in all brevity, can be described as societies without a state-form (Clastres, 1980, p. 163). The chieftain holds a symbolic position of power without any individual political agency. Due to

the lack of a power divide within the primitive societal order, that is, the differentiation between rulers and the ruled, the chieftain is both a symbol and a function of unity while also being outside of the political decision-making process (Clastres, 1980, p. 165).

In a sense, then, the *pharmakos* of Ancient Greece can be regarded as an inverted variant of the chieftain in primitive societies: Both their function is to provide unity and social affirmation on the level of the symbolic order (Laplanche, 1967, p. 440) while simultaneously being endowed with certain privileges and social restrictions. The fact that the *pharmakos* is without social agency is mirrored in the chieftains' lack of political agency. We have to be aware, however, that the organizational structure of the Greek *polis* differentiated between rulers and the ruled, therefore clearly falling into the 'state' category as outlined by Clastres.

4. Pharmakos and immunitas

The following section will aim to relate the sacrificial interpretation of *pharmakos* by Girard to the immunitary function highlighted by Roberto Esposito. Since there are substantial differences between the states of Antiquity and the territorial and colonial state forms of the modern era, it seems worthwhile to examine in how far the notion of *pharmakos* is applicable in this comparison.

Whereas Girard speaks in terms of control of arbitrary and infinite circles of violence concerning *pharmakos*, Esposito links it to an immunitary function of the body politic, highlighting its etymological connection towards the modern usage of the word in both the medical and political vocabulary. Relating this to the structural analogy between the roles of chieftain and *pharmakos*, it should become clear why Esposito mentions the latter in the context of the etymology of the *body politic* (Böckenförde, 1978, p. 555): The mechanistic view of the state as a complete whole but made up of different parts, unable to exist separately and being in co-dependence to one another is the metaphor that constitutes the unity and affirmation of organisms and state societies alike. Command and control functions in both instances are necessary to ensure the orderly exchange of energy, information and resources as well as the persistence of such a system through time. For both, *pharmakos* serves as a means of immunisation towards disruptive forces and influences that potentially threaten the organisational whole.

The pathogenic matrix of the disease that attacked the body politic—whether a foreign invasion or civil war—lay outside the body, and the pathogen was transmitted through the infiltration of a contagious element that was not engendered by the body. (Esposito, 2002, p. 123)

The quote above by Esposito is illuminating in relation to Girard's *pharmakos*. In order to confront a danger perceived as being outside of or predating the state, the remedy chosen is a mimicking of the original threat to further a process of immunisation. With the beginning of the modern era, this type of analogy can be found in the field of medicine as well, the prerequisite for this semantic shift being a change in the body metaphor, rendered possible in part by the epidemics of the time period as well as through the works of Paracelsus.

Paracelsus initiated an approach that was diametrically opposed: what heals is not the allopathic principle of the contrary, but rather the homeopathic principle of the similar. Contrary to the Galenic assumption that 'contraria a contrariis curantur' that heat cures cold and vice versa, he asserted the isopathic rule that 'like cures like': (...) Even in the highly imaginative lexicon of astral correspondences, we come closer to the heart of the matter: if the cure against a poison is poison, then disease and health no longer lie along the axis of a frontal opposition, but in a dialectical relationship that naturally makes one the opposite of the other, but also and above all, the instrument of the other. (Esposito, 2002, p. 125)

The tactic of counteracting a phenomenon with sameness rather than with otherness historically developed via an epistemology that is equally medical as it is political. In a modern sense, then, the *pharmakos* of Antiquity was not the other of the ruling class, it was its dialectical self. They both shared an aura of privilege, symbolic influence and inviolability while being at opposite ends of the social spectrum, but the sacrificial function stayed intact in either case: The sacrifice of one's civic life (*βίος*, *bios*) for political office on one hand and bare life (*ζωή*, *zōē*) in the course of holy festivities on the other signify forms of ultimate contribution towards a continuity of the *polis*.

5. Friends and enemies

Similarly but under different historical and judicial prerequisites, the friend-enemy distinction Carl Schmitt focussed on in the first half of the 20th century (Schmitt, 1932) refers to friend and enemy on the basis of mutual recognition (*jus hostis*), constituting a dialectical whole without which, according to Schmitt, the political is simply impossible. It is important to note, however, that neither friend nor enemy were necessarily conceived of coming from an outside, rather, they were always part of the same *mythical mechanism* situated on the inside of the body politic, whether it would be warring nations or civil war as Schmitt noted in his commentary on Hobbes.

The philosophy of German idealism, first Kant in *Critique of Judgment* (1790), distinguished ‘inner’ from ‘outer’, culminating in the distinction between living being and dead matter and thus draining the image of ‘mechanism’ from all mythical, all living character. Mechanism and machine thus became inanimate, utilitarian bodies. To this must be added the further differentiation of dead mechanism from animate work of art in the sense of aesthetic productivity, a conceptualization made current by Schelling and the Romantics. For Hobbes, though, mechanism, organism, and work of art are still parts of the machine. Conceived as products of the highest human creativity. Mechanism and the machine therefore had for him and for his age thoroughly mythical meanings. (Schmitt, 1938, p. 40)

Esposito delineates this process of stately transformation in another way. Rather than evoking imagery of mythical machines, he stays on the side of biological metaphor, therefore implying a biopolitical dimension in relation to state power.

As Derrida has argued in a form that reinstates the logic and semantics of the immune lexicon, the pharmakon is what is opposed to its other not by excluding it, but, on the contrary, by incorporating and vicariously substituting it. The other resists the pharmakon by imitating it, and confronts it by obeying it, like the ancient katechon in the face of anomy. The pharmakon is both the evil and what opposes it, by bowing to its logic. (...) Disease and antidote, poison and cure, potion and counter-potion: the pharmakon is not a substance but rather a non-substance, a non-identity, a non-essence. But above all, it is something that relates to life from the ground of its reverse. More than affirming life, it negates its negation, and in the process ends up doubling it (...). (Esposito, 2002, p. 127)

As inhumane and as violent as the conflicts of first half of the European 20th century were, the political agents and groupings of the time saw this type of imitation game clearly: They recognized part of themselves in the other on the opposite end of the street fight and on the opposite isle of the parliament which intensified both political debate and political violence, not in spite, but because of it. Nowadays, these distinctions become increasingly harder to draw, not at least because a new form of imitation game, namely the Turing test (Turing, 1950), would provide following generations with a technological infrastructure that would lead the efficacy of assemblies and gatherings -which have accompanied political decision making since the dawn of known history- into a deep crisis. The despotic, exclusionist, separatist, elitist and extremist side of this process already attained *being-in-the-world*² and the choices of tactics and targets for its actualization become increasingly effortless via

² in the language of Heidegger

various means of data acquisition and processing. However, the psychological strategy always stays the same: After the directive and target are chosen, one only has to exchange the belief in the state-form as an expression of identity with the totalitarian, libidinal, narcissistic regnancy of affect through the seeming comfort and ‘neutrality’ of digital terminals. Troll farms, alt-right Twitter bots and gaslighting techniques might serve as current examples of a mimetic double-negation of both sacrificial functions and friend-enemy distinctions.

This development draws uncanny parallels to an anecdote of the last century, when Carl Schmitt met Mussolini and the latter begged the former that he should attempt everything in his power to save the institution of the state from its double, i.e. its political entropy.

Carl Schmitt told me that he was once shipped off, along with German state officials and professors, Heidegger among them, by Goring in an overnight train to Rome to a conversation with Mussolini. And that Mussolini told him, then, in 1934: ‘Save the state from the party!’ Indignation won’t help one bit here. (Taubes, 1993, p. 70)

The obvious conclusion from this anecdote is that Mussolini, despite all his efforts, was unable to do so and feared that fascist Germany would meet the same fate. Evidently, his concerns were not unfounded.

6. Critique of Violence

Let us briefly return to the more fundamental reflections about violence. Contrary to Girard, Walter Benjamin interprets mythical violence as a manifestation of the gods and in distinction to Schmitt, Benjamin holds that individuals and their institutions cannot decide on the justness of violent ends.

For it is never reason that decides on the justification of means and the justness of ends, but fate-imposed violence on the former and God on the latter. (...) As regards man, he is impelled by anger, for example, to the most visible outbursts of a violence that is not related as a means to a preconceived end. It is not a means but a manifestation. Moreover, this violence has thoroughly objective manifestations in which it can be subjected to criticism. These are to be found, most significantly, above all in myth. Mythical violence in its archetypal form is a mere manifestation of the gods. Not a means to their ends, scarcely a manifestation of their will, but first of all a manifestation of their existence. (Benjamin, 1999, p. 280)

The state as an abstract entity, then, has a twofold problem with violence as it seeks to limit arbitrary violence among its subjects but can only do so by employing the same, therefore already dialectically preparing its own possibility of demise (Benjamin, 1999, p. 281). Benjamin's differentiation between divine and mythical violence is of importance in this context since it illuminates the alternating states of reasons and legitimations of violence.

Just as in all spheres God opposes myth, mythical violence is confronted by the divine. And the latter constitutes its antithesis in all respects. If mythical violence is lawmaking, divine violence is law-destroying; if the former sets boundaries, the latter boundlessly destroys them; if mythical violence brings at once guilt and retribution, divine power only expiates; if the former threatens, the latter strikes; if the former is bloody, the latter is lethal without spilling blood. (...) For with mere life the rule of law over the living ceases. Mythical violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake, divine violence pure power over all life for the sake of the living. The first demands sacrifice, the second accepts it. (Benjamin, 1999, p. 280)

7. Conclusion

The sacrificial function is differentiated into social sub-systems along with the divine and the mythical in the sense that myth creation for political ends sooner or later demands some kind of sacrifice. Coupled with the friend-enemy distinction, this request can in some cases be directed towards a social grouping as long as they have been identified as *enemy-worthy*, that is, *jus hostis*. Without that justification, the sacrifice towards the cause would be unworthy and therefore unjust, which mirrors Girards' remarks of the avoidance of impure sacrifice. That leads us right into the sphere of the divine and its mundane institutions. The state certainly incorporates a dimension of the divine when it shows the will to accept personal sacrifice in the form of labour towards the perpetuation of the *satus quo*. No matter how enlightened or secular, it seems that the state cannot completely shed its religious origins, since in monotheism, the first and last reign on earth was and is the reign of god (Peterson, 1935).

Since pre-history, any media technology was able to couple these reciprocal effects between violence, myth and the divine. It should come as no surprise then, that Benjamin ascribes a cultic origin to the earliest media.

Originally, the embeddedness of an artwork in the context of tradition found expression in a cult. As we know, the earliest artworks originated in the service of rituals — first magical, then religious. And it is highly significant that the artwork's auratic mode of existence is never entirely severed from its ritual function. (Benjamin, 1955, p. 24)

In slight contrast to Benjamin, we would argue that while technical modes of reproduction might have temporarily removed the *aura* of myth from its objects, the remnants of their cultic origin are in the process of re-entering into medial form.

The imitation game mentioned earlier was originally devised as a thought experiment in the context of computation and artificial intelligence. Alan Turing, himself a closeted homosexual, stipulated that if a machine might successfully convince a human being that it is human itself, it should be considered sufficient proof of artificial intelligence. The implication being that successful mimicry requires a certain amount of wit, creativity and repartee. In other words, the machine could successfully complete the imitation game solely via subterfuge.

The Turing Machine, which is also called a universal machine, can potentially simulate any other mathematical machine, including itself. Until this day, the initial achievements of Alan Turing serve as the mathematical foundations of any commercial central processing unit currently in existence. In relation to a planetary-scale computing, another dimension of the imitation game enters the historical stage in which the possibilities of differentiation between mythical and divine violence and their modes of sacrifice become increasingly blurred. After all, when we use digital communication, we submit to the belief of communicating with a person while never being able to tell with certainty what part of the communication is algorithmic and what part is biological or psychological. The social order of this century combines machine and human intelligence and their agency into the same *body politic*, Hobbes' »mythical machine« integrating nature, infrastructure, social systems, and cloud-based computation into a single system. (Bratton, 2017).

The sphere of nonviolent means opens up in the realm of human conflicts relating to goods. For this reason technique in the broadest sense of the word is their most particular area. Its profoundest example is perhaps the conference, considered as a technique of civil agreement. For in it not only is nonviolent agreement possible, but also the exclusion of violence in principle is quite explicitly demonstrable by one significant factor: there is no sanction for lying. Probably no legislation on earth originally stipulated such a sanction. This makes clear that there is a sphere of human agreement that is nonviolent to the extent that it is wholly inaccessible to violence: the proper sphere of 'understanding', language. Only late and in a peculiar process of decay has it been penetrated by legal violence in the penalty placed on fraud. (Benjamin, 2007, p. 277)

While Benjamin wrote in an era where the irrevocable basis for epistemology, ontology and phenomenology was solely based on language, his observations about it in connection with law and violence have to be re-addressed in the 21st century. Benjamin witnessed the forfeiture of the human

monopoly on *aura* through mechanical means of reproduction. In our present, we experience the expiration on the human monopoly on language via algorithmic mimicry. The implications of this development should become clearer while our civilisations are heading further into an era of post-truth.

It is one of the greatest challenges of our century to think about the prerequisites, conditions, possibilities and limits of a sociality that would be able to interact comfortably with the ambivalence and the indistinguishability of political agency from fake news, opposition research and *компрома т*³. Whereas the political Left is still in the process of re-defining its *raison d'être* in the wake of global extremist insurgency and online radicalisation, it seems necessary to expand the focus beyond mere political distinctions made in cabinets or along demarcation lines.

Humanity as such cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet. The concept of humanity excludes the concept of the enemy, because the enemy does not cease to be a human being and hence there is no specific differentiation in that concept. That wars are waged in the name of humanity is not a contradiction of this simple truth; quite the contrary, it has an especially intensive political meaning. When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity, it is not a war for the sake of humanity, but a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent. At the expense of its opponent, it tries to identify itself with humanity in the same way as one can misuse peace, justice, progress, and civilization in order to claim these as one's own and to deny the same to the enemy. (Schmitt, 1932, p. 54)

Any endeavour in making a friend-enemy distinction within humanity is an attempt of the dissolution of the latter. Contrary to Schmitt's present, however, the seemingly sublime forces of modern-day extinction events and planetary-scale computing, while certainly of human origin, cannot fully be placed within his notion of humanity. The «mythical machine» of our day has not only to be complicit with all aspects of man-made existence, but also with all other forms of matter, organism, software and code in order to try to minimize the violence of future times. "Collective activity outside of exploitation is comrade-ship. It has to be practiced not only with all other subordinated people, but with all subordinated agents, living and non-living. Otherwise, the world ends⁴". It is at this juncture where the *pharmakos* might be able to teach us an invaluable lesson.

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kompromat> (last access: Sep 10th , 2019)

⁴ <https://tankmagazine.com/issue-80/features/mckenzie-wark/> (last access: Sep 28th, 2019)

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